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PRE-RELEASED TO GAY AND LESBIAN MEDIA--NOT TO BE USED BEFORE 12/22/93

NAMBLA, PEDOPHILIA AND THE QUEER COMMUNITY

Despite the fact that the overwhelming evidence and opinion of reputable researchers and experts has found that pedophilia and child abuse are problems residing predominantly in heterosexual surroundings, the radical right, and their biased research groups and individuals, continue to try to convince America that there is some diabolical connection between pedophilia and the Gay and Lesbian Community. This piece of rank propaganda has recently reared its ugly head at the KTSC-TV Town Meeting in Colorado Springs and by Tom Minnery of Focus on the Family on Colorado Springs Radio. It also appears regularly in Focus and Colorado for Family Values literature and on such venues as the Christian Broadcast Network and on the Jerry Falwell Show, among many more.

Judge Jeffrey Bayless, Denver District Court, struck down Colorado's Amendment 2 stating that:

> "...If the compelling interest relates to protecting children physically from pedophiles, the testimony of plantiff's witness Dr. Carol Jenney is more persuasive than anything presented by the defendants. Dr. Jenny practices at Denver's Children Hospital and made a study of persons who sexually abused children who were brought to that hospital. She indicated that pedophiles are predominantly heterosexuals not homosexuals. If the compelling interest is in protecting the psychological well-being of homosexual youth, the Court is unable to discern how allowing discrimination against them by virtue of the Colorado Constitution promotes their welfare. Defendants have failed to present sufficient evidence to support this claimed compelling interest..."

The Radical Right used this stereotype solely to promote fear, to win an election and to further increase its influence.

Invariably, the issue of the organization, The North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA), arises in the question of pedophilia and Gays and Lesbians are roundly condemned for its existence. An editorial in the Colroado Springs INDEPENDENT called for Gays and Lesbians to denounce pedophilia and NAMBLA. While the research done for this article has demonstrated that this has occurred, obviously it has not received enough coverage. It was also found that many people who could be viewed as gay-friendly, and, in truth, many gays and lesbians, were not aware of national and state organization views on these subjects.

Ground Zero Colorado Springs has consistently stated that it is strongly opposed to child abuse and child molestation of all types and Ground Zero certainly condemns those who practice or support it in any way, whether individually or as a group. NAMBLA, an organization that has no more than several hundred members WORLDWIDE, obviously falls within this category and is, therefore, an organization that Ground Zero denounces and condemns.

Peri Jude Radecic, National Director of the NGLTF, stated on KTSC-TV during a recent Town Meeting that she and the NGLTF condemn any and all who endorse, practice or support these illegal acts.

In a personal statement issued from her office in New York, Donna Red Wing, National Coordinator for the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), has said in urging opposition to NAMBLA that:

> "...we must refuse them a seat at our table. And if, somehow we find them at the table, or in a march, or in coalition, we must be willing to throw them out. NAMBLA is about the use and abuse of children. NAMBLA is about

George Neighbors, national director of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays has informed Ground Zero that P-FLAG'S national policy states that:

"...P-FLAG denounces the intent and inclusion of NAMBLA in any function related to the gay, lesbian and bisexual human rights movement."

"...Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Inc (P-FLAG) strongly condemns the sexual exploitation of children by any individual, group or organization in any form and under any circumstance."

"...the North American Man/boy Love Association is a pedophile organization whose whole purpose is to facilitate sex between adult men and young boys. P-FLAG, therefore, repudiates NAMBLA and its aims."

P-FLAG opposes the inclusion of NAMBLA in any umbrella organization, coalition, event, or activity that is associated with the gay, lesbian, bisexual communities or their families and friends."

According to Bonnie Frum, president of the Colorado Springs Chapter of P-FLAG, that chapter strongly endorses the national position.

Spokesperson Gregory King of The Human Rights Campaign Fund, the largest Gay and Lesbian national organization, with over 80,000 members, made the following statement:

NAMBLA is not a Gay organization. They are not a part of our community and we thoroughly reject their efforts to insinuate that pedophilia is an issue related to Gay and Lesbian civil rights. We {the HRCF} categorically reject NAMBLA and its agenda.

Rich Tafel, national Director of Log Cabin Republicans, a Washington-based gay organization, recently wrote in ALTERNATIVE Newspaper that:

"...This issue is not about inclusion or First Amendment rights. It is about a pedophile support group cloaking their mission in civil rights language. Exploitation of young people is deplorable regardless of the sexual orientation of the predator or the victim..."

"...On behalf of Log Cabin Republicans, I call on ILGA {and all organizations} to remove NAMBLA from their list of member organizations. But we shouldn't rest there. In our marches parades, and lobbying efforts, NAMBLA should no longer be at our side. One of the signs of a politically mature movement is its ability to clearly articulate what it is and what it isn't. NAMBLA marching under our banner of gay equality is a travesty..."

The National Steering Committee for Stonewall 25, The International March on the United Nations to Affirm the Human Rights of Lesbian and Gay People (June 26, 1994) officially stated:

"...we do not support or condone the sexual victimization of any people, to include but not be limited to youth, mentally or physically disabled persons, women as well as men. Furthermore, we do not support or condone the activities or viewpoints of organizations that condone pedophilia. In addition, we encourage IGLA to disassociate itself from NAMBLA.

In 1990, the International Lesbian and Gay Association passed a resolution that, in fact, was opposed by NAMBLA, said statement strongly supporting laws that protect children. Since, NAMBLA, and several other organizations in other countries, have had a running argument in which, among other things, NAMBLA labeled ILGA"s position "...as dishonest..." and "another tired example of adults deciding what's best for kids."

The official IGLA statement in regard this subject says:

"Against this background {as summarized above} the ILGA Secretariats Committee, meeting in New York City from 5 to 7 November 1993, has written

not resign by the end of the year the ILGA Secretariats Committee proposes that they be expelled at the next ILGA World Body Conference, which under ILGA's constitution is the only body that can make such decisions."

The several organizations that were found to be in violation of the position of the ILGA in regard child exploitation (including NAMBLA) have refused to resign. The issue will be presented to the full convention next year.

Various other Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual and Transgendered organizations in Colorado contacted, such as La Guia (Southern Colorado Gay and Lesbian Hispanic Organization), Pueblo After 2, Colorado Alliance to Restore Equality, The Common Decency Coalition (Grand Junction), and Eagle County for Human Rights concur with Ground Zero's statement and with the intent of all of the above statements. Further, Equality Colorado and the Pikes Peak Gay and Lesbian Community Center have issued statements opposing and condemning those, individually or collectively, who support or commit the illegal act of pedophilia. In fact, though it is impossible to reach all organizations in the state and around the country by phone (there is no single umbrella group that represents all), not one organization reached varied significantly in its policy on this subject.

Donna Red Wing best summed up the near unanimous opinion of Gays and Lesbians nationwide:

> "It is time we, as lesbians, gay men and bisexual people, begin to confront the reality of child sexual assault. We must challenge our community, and the community at large, to begin to create a safer world for our children. It is time that we, as queer people, challenge the rhetoric of the {radical} right and begin to replace the lie, that we are monsters, molesters and predators, with a commitment to the rights of children. That commitment must be matched with dollars and volunteer hours, with an advocacy for primary prevention programming and with a resolve to up the ante for those who would violate children. We must work towards treatment for survivors and f o r young offenders. We must be willing to 'throw the book' at repeat offenders. We must be willing, as a society, to name our fathers and our brothers and our uncles. We must be willing to believe and support our children."

It is hoped, without much conviction, that this will put to an end the speculation as to the overwhelming position of the Gay and Lesbian Community and to the massive campaign of lies and misrepresentations made by the Radical Right. However, since it is difficult to imagine that the leadership of the Radical Right has not always known the truth, it is hard to truly expect them to stop the lies.

end

GROUND ZERO IS A HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY ORGANIZATION THAT CONCENTRATES ON ISSUES IN THE GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDERED COMMUNITY, PRINCIPALLY THROUGH EDUCATION, COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND COALITION, GROUND ZERO IS A 501 (C) (3) ORGANIZATION THAT DEPENDS ON CONTRIBUTIONS FROM ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS TO SUSTAIN ITS ACTIVITIES.

is time for Gay and Lesbian groups to denounce pedophilia and the group NAMBLA. It was my opinion that we had and my research of the next several days revealed that most groups and organizations have or are in the process of doing so.

I did find that a very poor job has been done in getting this information out. This has allowed misinformation, lies and myths that flowed from the Radical Right in regard this subject to go unchecked. It has permitted them to sell a stereotype that portrays Gays and Lesbians, in Donna Red Wing's(GLAAD national Coordinator) words, as "...monsters, molesters and predators."

It has not mattered to the Right that this is blatant propaganda of the worst type. It is destructive, untrue and has damaged the lives and reputations of millions of Gays and Lesbians solely for the purpose of building the political power and coffers of an elite leadership. These leaders want their followers to think that their goal is about some high religious ideal but in fact it is about greed and a lust for power.

With the exception of highly biased radical right research organizations and the like of Dr. Paul Cameron, who has been held in disrepute by virtually all of his colleagues and professional organizations, it is nearly universally held that the overwhelming preponderance of child molestation and child abuse is done by heterosexuals (95%+). Of this, the greatest problem involves heterosexual males and young girls.

This is not meant to say there are no perverts and problems in the homosexual world. The truth is that child abuse is a problem with which we all, homosexuals and heterosexuals, have to deal. It is counter-productive for one element to attempt to blame another element for this problem. It would be better to recognize that society in general must face the horror of child abuse in America head on and must commit itself to stopping it at all costs. And where there are already victims, society must work to ameliorate the effects of their victimization. The problem of perpetrators, too, must be addressed. Can anyone doubt that they must be ill and dysfunctional?

It would seem much more productive to work together to combat this tragedy on our children rather than to spend the vast amounts of time and money used to attack and vilify one element of society and to pass discriminatory legislation such as Amendment 2.

How much could be done with the millions being spent by both sides on Amendment 2 type of issues nationwide to address this situation head on? How much could be done with the rumored $1,000,000 that will be spent by the State of Colorado by the time Amendment 2 reaches the U. S. Supreme Court? Add the money being wasted to the energies that could be redirected to our children under attack and I believe that miracles could be worked.

As I called to gather the information that was used in the news release reported herein, I was impressed by the fact that no one I called on had difficulty in stating very strong positions against child abuse and molestation and against NAMBLA. Even the ILGA, an international organization that has to balance the views and mores of many countries in its pronouncements, had little difficulty in issuing their statement.

I hope that the information contained in the news article is sufficient to end once and for all the stereotypes that have been used against me and my gay and lesbian sisters and brothers. I fear, however, that those who have told the lies and who have developed the myths and fear already knew the truth when they started. I do not believe that they will turn their back on the "goose that laid the golden egg."